

Here's what *The New York Times* predicts for
the collectibles of the future:

THE COLLECTING COMPULSION

By Fred Ferretti



If within you bubbles a need to accumulate early maps of Vietnam, Watergate Hotel stationery, lapel buttons embossed with unprintable imprecations against Iran, Alfred Hitchcock movie posters, nostalgic mementos of Spiro Agnew or videotape cassettes of almost-current television commercials, then you are among the

more knowledgeable collectors of today's arcane trivia — those mass-produced, mundane items that often have little esthetic worth but which do have the capacity to make you remember and are therefore "collectibles."

Our national compulsion to collect appears limitless today, for a valid collectible is virtually anything, according to Kyle Husfloen, editor of *The Antique Trader Weekly*, a journal published in Dubuque, Iowa, that claims to be the country's most widely read periodical about antiques and collectibles. "More people are collecting more things," Mr. Husfloen says, "for fun, for profit and simply for the thrill

of accumulating."

Today's hot items, Mr. Husfloen says, include "anything that has to do with recent events" — such as literature about Three Mile Island and the New York City subway strike. He notes that a Nixon campaign button can bring \$40 these days. Farrah Fawcett and "Six Million Dollar Man" television dolls are also becoming more important as collectibles, Mr. Husfloen says, adding that, among collectors, Miss Fawcett is called Farrah while her estranged husband, Lee Majors, is "only the Six Million Dollar Man."

Burger King throwaways are important, as are "anything with the Beatles on it,"

anything colored like a rainbow. People also want valentines, pinball machines, Civil War paraphernalia, pewter spoons, pressing irons, sheet music, fire trumpets and cookie cutters. "I suppose one of the pieces of advice I can offer," he says "is to grab as much as you can and store it."

"What's hot now? Anything kitschy. You know: big clocks set in Art Deco palm trees, seminudes with clocks in their navels. Very big. Other stuff? McDonald's advertising giveaways are really good kitsch that are going to be worth dough. I'd say anything that has to do with nostalgia, even today's nostalgia: media events, radio, television, movie tie-ins. They all are big now. Among the things being sought today are C.I.A. cover envelopes. Everybody knows now that a letter from Washington which says something like 'Recruitment Depart-

ment' or 'Privileged Medical Correspondence' is C.I.A. mail, and an envelope like that can get you \$8."

Mr. William Frost Mobley, a book and print dealer in Wilbraham, Mass., has become deeply involved in "the things that reflect our social history"

These include, according to Mr. Mobley, tickets for World Series games, for Beatles and Rolling Stones concerts, playbills and concert programs, notices of art exhibitions — "anything that is essentially free and, under normal circumstances, would find its way into the trash basket."

Don't throw away your old copies of TV Guide. "What better chronicle of our time exists?" asks Mr. Mobley, who also predicts that just about everything related to the late Alfred Hitchcock will become scarce and expensive, as will old Christmas cards, razorblade packages, Edward

Gorey posters and, "because of rapidly changing prices," restaurant menus. There is even increasing interest in restaurant doggie bags; a friend of Mr. Mobley has a mounted collection of 50.

"We're talking about things that are made to be thrown away but which, psychologically, you just can't throw away. So they go from desk to trunk, to box, to attic, to garage, and then they're recirculated through tag sales."

What's going to be very big? Mr. Mobley reflects. "I expect that John Anderson memorabilia — anything to do with him, whether he wins or loses — will be very valuable in a short time." ■

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The Cover



YOU HEAR the Irish talk about the "little people" but very, very few people have ever seen any of them. But there's a man in Salt Lake County whose home abounds with his own small folk. Some of them are familiar to all. There's Robinson Crusoe and his Man Friday; Long John Silver and Ben Gunn, Rip Van Winkle, Friar Tuck, cowboys and a variety of elves and sprites. To find out more about this merry crew, turn to pages 4-5.



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